

AN HUMBLE

ADDRESSES

From the
PEOPLE of ENGLAND
To their

Representatives in PARLIAMENT,

For an Act against Buying and Selling of Offices.

Gentlemen,

THE great Trust and Confidence which we have Reposed in you, will sufficiently convince all the World, that we do not presume to make this Address upon the least distrust of your Prudence and Care over us; which on the contrary, we are so sensible of, that we desire to make all due Acknowledgment for the same, and in a more particular manner, for the Establishment of the Government under our most *Auspicious and Gracious Sovereigns King William and Queen Mary*, whose long and prosperous Reign over us is that great Blessing we daily Pray for, as the only means next under the Divine Providence, that can make us the most Happy and Flourishing People in the World.

But considering the multitude and almost infinite Variety of Affairs both Foreign and Domestick that lie before you, 'tis a wonder that you should think of so many things as you do; and therefore, least one amongst so many should happen to escape your present Thoughts, which we conceive to be of more than ordinary Concern to us, We Humbly take the Freedom at this time (which we hope is *Seasonable*) only to Recall it to your Memory, and (that is) *The Buying and Selling of Offices*.

We do not take upon us to say there hath been any such thing, but Humbly Submit to your determination of that Point, as the Grand Inquisitors and Representatives of the Nation; and shall only observe the Rational Consequences thereof, and that in case any such thing hath been practised in former times, That we may very probably date all our Miseries from the Commencement thereof: For suppose it were possible in former Ages, that a Judges Place could not be obtained without a Generous Acknowledgment of so Great a Favour, What can be expected from such a Person, who hath perhaps a numerous Family, no Estate in the Country, and is forced to borrow a great Sum at Interest to lay down upon such an Occasion? Will not such a Man in all humane probability rather comply with the Times, than see his Family utterly Ruin'd by losing his Place and Money too? And then as to the Cases of *Mens & Tuums*, Will not he that thinks it Lawful to Give for a judicial Place, think it also Lawful to take when he is in it? And doth not our Lives and Fortunes, our All, depend upon their Integrity and Ability? Who would wonder at the Case of the Ship-mony, the Dispensing Power, Excessive Bail, Unlawful Fines, Unusual Punishments, Prosecution of the Bishops, or the like, in such a Case? Either the Judges Acted according to their Judgment in these Cases, or they did not; if they did, we have nothing to say to them, but hope our Courts of Justice, both in *England and Wales*, will now be filled with more Able Men. If any of them did not Act according to their Judgments, then we submit to your Opinions, Whether this might not be the Secret and Original cause of their Compliance? And if in this Case, Why not in the other proceedings of the Ecclesiastical Court against that Reverend and Learned Prelate, the Bishop of *London*? The President and Fellows of *Magdalen Colledge*, &c. Since no Man can easily believe that a certain Bishop beyond Sea (whose Life and Conversation was so publicly known to the World) was merely prefer'd for his Piety and Devotion.

And might not the Oppressions of the Poor by the Officers of the Chimney-mony, Excise, &c. and all other Abuses and Extortions from the Common people, be publickly attributed to the same Cause? In the Case of the late Army, if any Officer purchased a Commission, What could be expected but that he should make his Soldiers contribute to it? And will not his Soldiers have it out in their Quarters? Nay, Might not this First introduce Billitting the same Soldiers upon several Houses at one time, and taking Money from every House, to the great Oppression of the Subjects? And must not the Nation always suffer by these ways? For a Soldier of Fortune, a Man of Honor and Experience, depends upon his known Courage and Merits, and either hath no Money to give, or else scorns to Submit to such Mercenary Terms; and when Merit gives place to Money, the Nation must be lost to any Enemy that will invade us.

Thus at length when the grievous Oppressions of the Officers become intolerable, and the People have no relief in the ordinary course of Justice (for when the *Inferior Officers* can Accuse their *Superiors*, they need not fear any Accusation themselves) then are they forced in all Humble manner to Petition for a Parliament, And what's the consequence of this? But Abhorrences against Petitioning, Advice for *Quo Warrantos*, Surrenders of Charters, and Regulations of Corporations, the freedom of Elections of Members to serve in Parliament are Violated; the Members must be Closetted, and all Men displaced and ruined that refuse to comply with their Terms; the Judges have Instructions in their Charges, to Preach up for Law the Kings Dispensing Power, and the Country Gentlemen invited by his Neighbours and proud of his new Authority amongst them, securely relies upon so great an Authority; and so by a Chain of necessary consequences, it seems to us, that all our Miseries may be derived from this Secret and Invisible Grievance of *Buying and Selling of Offices*.

Wherefore for avoiding the Effusion of Christian Blood, the Ruin and Destruction of Families, which must follow; First by the wicked Practices above mentioned (for Men will be Men to the end of the World) and afterwards in the Capital and other Punishment of the Authors of them.

Since our Religion teaches us Humility and Mercy, and not severe Persecutions of one another; Since the Fundamental and Original Cause of all our late Grievances may so much be attributed (as you see) to the want of such a Law by our former Representatives; and we that have the advantage of their Actions and Laws, must be the rather perswaded to bear with the consequences of their Omissions.

Therefore it is that we have thought fit with all due Reverence to acquaint you, That in regard we owe this happy Deliverance to the Providence of Almighty God, who forgiveth us many Sins, and delighteth not in the Destruction of an Offender, but rather in his Repentance; and in regard our Most Gracious Sovereign King William, the Glorious Instrument thereof, hath with so much Zeal and Compassion recommended to you a most general Act of Oblivion.

We shall like good Christians and good Subjects, rather chuse your Mercy than your Severity; rather chuse an Act of Prevention for the future, than an Act of Attainder for what is past; and that you may see we do so in earnest, we Humbly Present you with an Act for that purpose; The Substance and Form whereof is with all imaginable Duty and Defence submitted to your great Judgment and Discretion.

A Draught of an Act against the Buying and Selling of Offices.

FOrasmuch as it hath been found by Experience in all Ages, that no Government ever prospered where all Offices are Bought and Sold, but on the contrary, where Persons have been Preferred for their Merit and Ability, to Serve their King and Country, the Nation hath always been happy within it self, and successful against its Enemies.

Wherefore for the Incouragement of Industry and Vertue, and the Rooting out of Idleness and Corruption, for the Honour of God, the Advancement of Justice, the Security of the Lives, Religion, and Property of the Subjects, and for the more effectual Support and Defence of this Kingdom in these times of War, by able and prudent Officers both at Sea and Land.

Be it Enacted by our Sovereign Lord and Lady the King and Queen, by and with the Advice and Consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal and the Commons in Parliament Assembled, and by the Authority of the same; That all, and every Person or Persons, who since the 13th. day of Febr. last past, have been, or hereafter shall be admitted into any Office or Employment, Civil or Military, Judicial or Ministerial, within this Kingdom of England, Dominion of Wales, or Town of Berwick upon Tweed, (except such Offices as are herein after excepted) shall take this Oath following, in such Manner, at such Times, before such Persons, and in such Courts and Places as is appointed for the taking of the New Oaths, by one Act lately made for the Abrogating of the former Oaths of Allegiance and Supremacy, and appointing other Oaths, Viz.

"I (A.B.) do Swear, and solemnly Promise in the presence of Almighty God, that I have not given or promised to give any Money, Fee, Reward, or other Profit, Directly or Indirectly, to any Person or Persons whatsoever, for the Office (or Employment) of _____ or for the Deputation of the Office (or Employment) of _____ nor for the Interest or Recommendation of any Person or Persons whatsoever, in obtaining thereof: And that I do not know, or have in the least consented that any Friend, Relation, or other Person whatsoever, hath, should or shall hereafter, give or promise any such Reward, Directly or Indirectly to any Person or Persons whatsoever for the same.

"And further, I do Swear that I have not Received, nor Consented, nor willingly Permitted any other Person to Receive, nor will hereafter Receive, nor Consent or willingly Permit any other Person or Persons whatsoever to Receive, any Money, Fee, Reward, or other Profit, Directly or Indirectly, for any Office or Employment within my Disposal or Gift, nor for my Interest or Recommendation to obtain any Place or Employment whatsoever, (except such Offices and Employments as are excepted in one Act Intituled, *An Act against Buying and Selling of Offices*, made in the First Year of the Reign of King William and Queen Mary) all which I Solemnly Promise and Swear according to the plain and common Sense and Understanding of the same words, without any Equivocation, Mental Evasion, or Secret Reservation whatsoever, So help me God; and by the Contents of this Book.

A Clause that all Bargains and Assurances be void.

A Clause of Penalties and Disabilities in case of Neglect or Refusal, as in the case of the other Oaths.

Another more severe Clause of Penalties and Disabilities against all those that shall be Convicted of a Breach of the said Oath.

A Proviso, to except all such Offices and Persons as are excepted in a Statute made the 5th. and 6th. of Ed. VI. Ca. 16.

A Proviso, that this Act shall not extend to the accustomed Fees for Warrants, Patents or Commissions, &c.

Thus we have Humbly laid before you a hasty and short Scheme of our present Thoughts of this Matter for the publick good, which we Humbly Submit to your Correction and Improvement. And since there are but two ways left us for our Security, in this juncture of Affairs, viz. The Destruction of all Offenders, or else a Generous Pardon; for the Middle way of setting a Mark or Fine upon them, neither gains Friends nor prevents Enemies; we conceive the latter most consistent with the Protestant Religion, and being seconded by such a Law as is above set forth, may more effectually Establish our present happiness, and prevent the like Evils for the future, than any examples of Severity, or other proceedings whatsoever.

*Sublato fundamento currit opus
Et cessante causa cessat effectus.*

Licenced May 27. 1689.